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Table Talk

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"A sense of worthiness is a child's most important need." ~ Polly Berrien Berends

Why is Dietary Iron so Important?

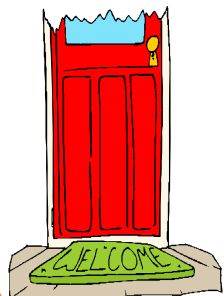
Iron, one of the most abundant metals on earth, is vital to normal human physiology. Most iron in the body is found in hemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen to developing tissues. It is an essential component of proteins involved in regulating cell growth, supporting the immune system and aiding brain development. The body uses iron to process the neurotransmitters that regulate the ability to pay attention, increase the motivation to stick with intellectually challenging tasks, increase attention span and improve motor skills and overall intellectual performance. A deficiency of iron limits oxygen delivery to cells, resulting in fatigue, poor work performance and decreased immunity.



Dietary iron is the number one nutritional deficiency, especially in fast-growing toddlers. There are two forms of dietary iron: heme and nonheme. Heme iron is derived from hemoglobin and is found in animal foods that originally contained hemoglobin, such as red meat, fish and poultry. Nonheme iron is found in plant foods, such as lentils and beans and is the form of iron added to iron-enriched and iron-fortified foods, such as ready-to-eat cereals. Heme iron is better absorbed, which means that the body is able to use the iron obtained from food. Several factors influence absorption. When body stores of iron are low, absorption increases. When stores are high, absorption decreases to help protect against toxic effects of iron overload. The type of iron also affects the amount absorbed. Heme iron from meat proteins is absorbed efficiently and is not significantly affected by diet, while nonheme iron in plant foods is affected by other food components. Consuming heme iron with nonheme will result in better absorption of nonheme iron. For example, serving meat with pinto beans will increase the absorption of the nonheme iron in the beans. Consuming a vitamin C-rich food also improves absorption; orange slices with iron-fortified cereal will improve absorption of the nonheme iron in the cereal.

Healthy full-term infants are born with a supply of iron that lasts 4 to 6 months. Iron in human breast milk is well absorbed by infants; it is estimated that infants can use more than 50% of the iron in breast milk compared to less than 12% of the iron in infant formula. Cow's milk is a poor source of iron which is not absorbed very well and may result in gastrointestinal bleeding. For these reasons, cow's milk should not be fed to infants until they are at least one year old. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants be exclusively breast fed for the first 6 months of life. Infants weaned from breast milk before 12 months of age should receive iron-fortified infant formula. CACFP requires that infants through 11 months of age receive iron-fortified formula unless a medical statement is on file.

Welcome new staff!



CACFP is pleased to welcome two new education program specialists to the Tucson office. Cori Hensley comes to us from Naturally Women Fitness Center where she taught nutrition and wellness classes. She completed her nutrition degree at the University of Arizona. She is married and has a dog named Cha-Cha. Ernie Montana has been employed by the State of Arizona for 6 years and most recently worked for the Office of Child Care Licensing at the Arizona Department of Health Services. He is a graduate of Northern Arizona University and is married with a five-year old son. **Welcome Cori and Ernie!**

Top 10 Healthy Snacks for Kids



Snacks are an important part of young children's diets. Tiny tummies need frequent refueling to meet nutrition and energy needs. Here are a few easy to prepare and nutritious snack ideas. Keep in mind that you must serve 2 of the 4 food components for the snack to be creditable for CACFP.

1. Whole wheat pita cut into quarters and spread with refried beans
2. Whole wheat tortillas spread with hummus
3. Kids' snack mix made with Goldfish crackers, Cheerios, raisins and mini pretzels served with low-fat milk
4. Pita bread mini cheese pizzas
5. Frozen grapes or blueberries with yogurt
6. Graham cracker sandwiches made with peanut butter and a slice of banana
7. Whole grain cereal with low-fat milk
8. Frozen banana chunks dipped in yogurt and rolled in crispy rice cereal
9. Peanut butter spread on apple slices
10. Cut up veggies served with low-fat dip

Increasing Language Readiness in Preschools

Best practices for effectively teaching children reading and writing have been the topic of countless research journals and books. While school administrators, politicians, policy-makers, teachers, and parents debate the merits of that research, preschools often get overlooked. In fact, the preschool is one of the most underutilized resources for preparing children for a successful school career.

Research shows that a significant number of Arizona's children require further fundamental reading and language skills. Using fourth grade as a benchmark, Arizona has more "below basic" readers than the national average (US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics). One researcher demonstrates how reading difficulties can lead to poor school achievement, in turn leading to a lack of commitment to school – a "cycle of failure" (Snow 1998). Statistically, minority children are at the greatest risk of developing reading difficulties; especially, children living in high poverty areas and poor rural towns. Arizona standards call for every child to learn to read proficiently by third grade.

What can preschools do? Preschools should promote a "reading readiness" agenda. Reading Readiness are those essential skills *before* formal reading instruction begins. Young children should have rich experiences with language in the preschool years, as this forms the basis for later reading success. Children who lack meaningful reading experiences at school entry have a more difficult time learning to read in the primary grades. (Hammill and McNutt, 1980; Scarborough, 1998).

Promoting a Reading Readiness Agenda involves five key areas.

- Oral Language skills develop vocabulary and basic knowledge about the world. One of the best ways to develop this is for the child to engage in interesting conversations with adults. Preschool professionals should encourage conversation and help them figure out and express ideas. Getting children talking about books is one strategy.
- Phonological Awareness is "the ability to think about how words sound, apart from the word's meaning. Studies have shown that children age 4-5 benefit from phonological practice. For example:
Syllables — Kitchen has two spoken parts
Rhyming words — Bed rhymes with bread
Beginning/ending word sounds — "cat" and "king" begin with the same sound
- Through the concept of Knowledge of Narrative/Story Sense, children begin to become more aware of the concept of the structure of stories. Young children should become aware of story elements; like, characters and the idea that stories have a beginning, middle, and end (sequence of events). Children need to hear and tell stories often and begin to predict what happens next in a story. One strategy is for preschool teachers to encourage conversations about concepts within books.
- Print Awareness is the idea that at an early age, children begin to recognize words in their environment. Preschool teachers should facilitate that curiosity by helping children to understand that print is everywhere in the world around them. Additionally, children should learn that print gives us information in our daily lives, such as directions to a friend's house and baking a cake.
- Lastly, young children need to be made aware of the purpose of books, through teacher modeling and lots of experience with books.

Next *Table Talk*, we will discuss some key strategies for preschool classroom use.

Resources

- Burns, M.S., P. Griffin, and C. Snow (Eds.) (1999). *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Snow, C.E., M.S. Burns, and P. Griffin (Eds.) (1998). *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Early Childhood-Head Start Task Force, *Teaching Our Youngest*, Washington, D.C., 2002.

Which has the most Iron?

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) 3 oz. ground beef | 3) 3/4 c Wheaties cereal |
| 2) 3 oz. chicken breast | 4) 1 c boiled pinto beans |

If you guessed the Wheaties, you are correct; 3/4 c provides 8.1 mg or 45% of the DV for iron. To help your body absorb that iron, serve with strawberries, cantaloupe or tangerines. The pinto beans take second place with 20% of the DV, the ground beef is third with 10% of the DV followed by the chicken breast with 6% of the DV.

How do you know if a food is a good source of iron? The Food and Drug Administration requires all food labels to include the percent daily value (%DV) for several key nutrients including iron. This number reflects the percentage of the daily value provided in one serving. A good rule of thumb when looking at food labels is that foods providing 10-19% of the DV for iron are a good source, while foods providing 20% or more of the DV are high in iron.

Nutrition Education

Do you need some ideas for introducing nutrition education at your center? Here are some websites you might want to visit for kid-friendly activities:



- www.eatright.org
- www.ific.org
- www.dole5aday.com
- www.nationaldairycouncil.org
- www.mypyramid.gov/kids
- www.cdc.gov/nccphp/dnpa/5aday/month

Record Maintenance

Are you swamped with paper? If you are considering reducing the amount of paper at your center, be sure you continue to maintain required CACFP paperwork. This includes: Income affidavits for all attending participants; CACFP Administrative Review Procedures; Permanent Agreement signed by ADE; Application and Management Plan including all attachments; Purchasing and Procurement Standards; Civil Rights Pre-Award Compliance Review; Racial/Ethnic Composition Table; Procedure for Complaints of Discrimination; written job descriptions including CACFP duties; copy of Food Service Vendor Contract (if using a caterer); Computer-Generated Meal Count Agreement (if using); all monthly CACFP records, including Claiming Percentage Rosters for free, reduced and paid participants; menu; Daily Meal Count Sheets; Weekly Attendance Meal Record; Food Service Cost Report (including receipts for food and supplies); CACFP Expense Worksheet (including receipts and/or bills for facility costs); Time Distribution Reports; Title XIX/XX documentation (if for-profit); sign-in/sign-out records; Infant Feeding Preference Form; Daily Meal Production Record for Infants; and Production Worksheets (if required at your center). You will need to retain all records for the current year onsite.



When your Specialist is conducting an evaluation at your center, he/she will ask to see a written policy and procedure regarding maintenance of all CACFP documentation. This policy should state where current year records are stored at the center, i.e. in the front office, director's office, kitchen, etc., as well as listing those employees with access to the records. Income Affidavits are confidential and must be kept in a locked storage area or file cabinet. **CACFP records must be maintained for five years.** Records for years other than the current year may be archived, but must be made immediately available upon request. Your written policy should also state where these records are archived. If you have any questions regarding record maintenance, contact your Specialist.

Compliance Concerns

NEW FISCAL YEAR

Remember that updated income eligibility guidelines for CACFP became effective **July 1, 2006**, and new affidavits were sent to you in May, 2006. Be sure you are using the updated income affidavits for any children who enroll in your center during July and August, 2006. The fiscal year for ADE begins on October 1, 2006, and the renewal "collection period" for income affidavits will be during September, 2006. During that time, **all** enrolled children will submit new FY2007 affidavits, including any children who enrolled during July and August. Be sure all income affidavits are complete and signed by the child's parent/guardian and approved by center staff.

BLUE CARDS

Effective April 1, 2005, enrollment forms or "blue cards" for children in child care centers (except emergency shelters, at-risk after-school snack programs and outside-school-hours care centers) must be updated annually. They must be signed by the child's parent/legal guardian. During a review, CACFP Specialists will randomly select a percentage of blue cards to ensure they have been updated. If your center uses another type of enrollment form, this must also be updated annually.



CACFP National Events

There are two upcoming conferences relating to CACFP. The first is the Child Care Food Program Roundtable's 15th Annual CACFP conference. It is scheduled for October 23 - 25 in San Diego. For more information visit www.ccfproundtable.org.

Another opportunity will be the TSA 20th Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas taking place September 24 - 26. This conference is open to anyone in the CACFP community and the theme this year is "Be a Superstar in the Lone Star State". Visit www.cacfp.org/conference.htm for more information and registration materials.

Safety Stuff

Did you know that September is National Hand Washing month? Good hand washing practices are the easiest and least expensive method of preventing illness and infection in your center. It's important that children wash their hands before eating, after playing outside or with pets, after using the bathroom and after blowing their noses. Here are 4 simple steps to clean small hands:

- Wet hands with warm running water.
- Add soap, then rub making a soapy lather for at least 20 seconds (long enough to sing the ABC song twice). Wash the front and back of hands as well as between the fingers.
- Rinse hands well with warm running water.
- Dry hands thoroughly with a clean disposable towel.

What type of soap should be used? Any regular liquid soap from a pump dispenser may be used. In October, 2005, a panel of federal health advisors determined that anti-bacterial soaps are no better than regular soap and water for fighting illness in the household.



Renewal Training

Have you signed up for renewal training yet?

Register online at:

<http://www.ade.az.gov/onlineregistration>



Did you know that, botanically speaking, a tomato is a fruit? However, since the tomato is typically served as a meal, or part of a main course of a meal, many people consider it a vegetable. The tomato is native to Central, South and southern North America from Mexico to Peru and is usually a red fruit, but does come in other colors including yellow, orange, pink and purple. Multicolored and striped fruit can also be found. Tomatoes are one of the most common garden crops in the United States. The heaviest tomato ever weighed 7 lb 12 oz and was grown in Edmond, Oklahoma in 1986.

They are high in vitamin C and beta-carotene. They also contain large amounts of the antioxidant lycopene. There are thousands of tomato varieties, but the most widely available fall into one of the following categories, based mostly on shape and size: cherry, plum and slicing tomatoes. A fairly new tomato in the cherry tomato group is the grape tomato. Try these in salads or eaten as a snack. Most tomatoes today are picked before fully ripe. They are bred to continue ripening, but the enzyme that ripens tomatoes stops working when it reaches temperatures below 12.5 °C. Once an unripe tomato drops below that temperature, it will not continue to ripen. Once tomatoes have fully ripened, they may be stored in the refrigerator if they will not be used right away. They should, however, be served at room temperature.

One medium tomato provides 30 calories, 0.5 g fat, 1 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 0.6 mg iron, 76 RE vitamin A, 3 mg vitamin C, 6 mg calcium and 19 mcg folate

Vegetable Pasta Italiano

1/2 pound lean ground turkey

1 red bell pepper, seeded and thinly sliced

1 T paprika

1 can (14-1/2 oz) crushed tomatoes

1 can (14-1/2 oz) reduced-sodium chicken broth

2 c uncooked bow-tie pasta

2 c broccoli florets, washed

1 c cauliflower florets, washed

1/2 bunch parsley

1/4 c seasoned dry bread crumbs

1/4 c grated Parmesan cheese

Crumble ground turkey into skillet and brown over medium high heat for 2 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add red pepper strips and paprika, cook for 2 more minutes. Add crushed tomatoes, chicken broth and pasta. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove lid and arrange broccoli and cauliflower over the pasta. Replace lid and continue cooking for 10 minutes. Pull leaves from parsley stems and combine with bread crumbs and grated cheese. Toss. Sprinkle over vegetables in skillet and let stand for 3 minutes before serving. Makes 6 servings.

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